



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

Star
Showbiz



THE JOURNEY OF GLORY

Two-day event marks 40 years of Bangladesh
Shilpakala Academy

PAGE 9

'UKRAINE CRISIS ENDS'

President makes dramatic decision
to hold early polls; rivals agree

PAGE 8

Dhaka getting awful getup

Tk 4.5cr face-lift project
promises shock to T20
WC cricket tourists

TAWFIQUE ALI

The Dhaka North City Corporation's initiative to beautify the capital using toilet tiles ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup cricket would spoil the cityscape and wrongly represent the country, said eminent architects.

With some private advertising firms, the DNCC is doing up the central reservations of some important roads with concrete structures removing ornamental plants, saplings and guardrails.

The project would cost around Tk 4.5 crore.

Advertising firm Vinyl World Group is beautifying the airport road central reservation stretching from Jahangir Gate to Kakoli intersection. Similar work is being carried out on Rokeya Sarani, Sony Cinema intersection in Mirpur and Gulshan by other firms.

The waist-high zigzag brick walls clad with glazing toilet and kitchen tiles in the middle of the roads will only offer a clumsy and disgusting view, said Mubasshar Hussein, former president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB).

Images of some national literary figures with inscriptions on stones would be showcased on concrete structures, he said, adding that it was unfathomable how people would



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Brick structures wrapped with kitchen and toilet tiles are being built on the central reservation of a thoroughfare near Mohakhali flyover as part of a "beautification project" launched by Dhaka North City Corporation ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup. Experts say that it is tasteless and devoid of aesthetic standards.

The murder of Major General Abul Manzur

LAWRENCE LIFSCHULTZ

In early June 1981, three days after the assassination of General Ziaur Rahman, then President of Bangladesh, Major General Mohammed Abul Manzur was murdered while in Army custody inside the Chittagong Cantonment. The preponderance of evidence indicates that General Manzur was slain by a high-ranking military officer who was dispatched from Dhaka with one mission only: to assassinate Manzur.

This is the conclusion of a long investigation by Lawrence Lifschultz that is based, in part, on the testimony of an eyewitness. The question now is will his killers finally be identified and put on trial thirty-three years after this distinguished veteran of the Liberation War was ruthlessly murdered.

Lifschultz concludes that Manzur was wrongly, yet intentionally, framed and vilified for General Zia's murder by a tight knit group of repatriated officers, as part of an operation to remove him from his position in the Army. By doing so they could proceed unhindered with a purge of the veterans of the Liberation War from the Bangladesh Army and thereby remove the final obstacle to their consolidation of power. Trials, confessions extracted by brutal torture, executions and a targeted purge of "Mukti Bahini" Army officers from the officer corps immediately followed Manzur's death.

Manzur's hope of clearing his name of the slander set lose against him by General Ershad and his entourage was foreclosed by one man entering Manzur's cell and killing him with a single bullet to the head. It is time for a responsible Court in Bangladesh to learn the identity of the man who pulled the trigger that ended Manzur's life and thereby facilitated the imposition of a military dictatorship in Bangladesh for the decade that followed.



Lawrence Lifschultz



Nation pays tributes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brimming with flowers, the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday wore a solemn look as the International Mother Language Day came upon us. The place was visited by a sea of humans.

Starting from the head of the state, people of all walks of life paid their tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives to restore honour for our mother tongue in 1952, a rare event in the history of the world.

Bare-footed and clad in black and white, the people showed respect and love for the language martyrs by placing wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Jamaat candidate also a polls official

5 BNP leaders too appointed to conduct
Cox's Bazar upazila elections

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Jamaat-e-Islami leader, who is vying for the vice-chairman post in Pekua upazila in the February 27 upazila election, has been appointed as presiding officer there, violating the electoral codes.

Md Nuruzzaman, ameer of Pekua sadar union Jamaat, has already taken training on election duties, said sources in Pekua upazila office.

Nuruzzaman is a teacher at Besaratul Ulm Fazil Madrasa in Rajakhali union of Pekua, said Imtiaz Uddin, secretary general of the upazila Jamaat unit. Imtiaz himself has been appointed an assistant presiding officer.

Apart from the Jamaat duo, five BNP leaders have been appointed as polling officials in Pekua.

They are Fakhruddin Farayezee, joint convener of BNP's Chakaria municipality unit, Zainul Abedin, president of Toitong unit, Md Yusuf, secretary general of the same unit, Monirul Kabir, president of Shilkhali union Jubo Dal, and Md Ramij, former general secretary of Rajakhali union unit. Fakhruddin was appointed as presiding officer and the rest as assistant presiding officers.

Presiding officer is the chief of a polling station while assistant presiding officer is the second in command.

According to the Election Commission's guideline on appointment of polling officials, neutrality must be considered before appointment.

Contacted, an official at the EC secretariat expressed shock over such appointments.

"How can such appointments be given when neutrality is one of the key criteria in appointing polling officials? We will definitely look into the matter," he told The Daily Star, preferring anonymity.

Asked to comment, Imtiaz said, "My identity will change once I take

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

UPAZILA ELECTIONS National issues come into play

SHAKHAWAT LITON, WASIM BIN HABIB and
PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

To win over voters in the upazila elections, the BNP is highlighting critical national issues that have rattled the Awami League government over the past five years.

In their campaigns, local BNP leaders and the party-backed candidates are focusing on the one-sided January 5 polls, graft allegations against some AL ministers and MPs, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances and the scams over Padma bridge project, sharemarket and Hall-Mark loans.

Local issues such as violence, tender manipulation and anomalies by the ruling party's unruly men in social safety net programmes are also being brought up but to a limited extent.

In efforts to counter the BNP, the AL men are projecting government successes, particularly the war crimes trials and improvement in education, health and communications sectors.

The AL campaigns are also reminding people of mindless violence unleashed by BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men at the end of last year in the name of anti-government agitations.

The Daily Star yesterday talked over the phone with more than 15 district and upazila level-leaders of AL and BNP to know their strategy for the second phase upazila parishad polls scheduled for February 27. This time 117 upazilas will go to polls.

Both the parties adopted similar strategies in the polls in 97 upazila parishads held on Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Four Myanmarers are seen chained together in a room. Malaysian police rescued them along with 11 Bangladeshis on Thursday. They had apparently fallen victim to an illegal immigrant-trafficking syndicate.

11 rescued weeks into abduction

Malaysian cops confirm identity
of Bangladeshis; embassy not sure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian police rescued 11 Bangladeshi and four Myanmar nationals, suspected to have been held for weeks by human traffickers for ransom, in Penang state on Wednesday night.

Police raided two adjacent apartments on the 15th floor of a building at Macallum Street Ghaut in George Town area and rescued the victims, reported Malaysian English daily The Star yesterday, quoting Mohd Nashir, assistant commissioner of police in Penang.

The traffickers demanded a ransom of up to RM 10,000 (1Malaysian ringgit = Tk23.60) from each of the victims' family, said the cop.

However, the identities of the 11 could not be confirmed. Contacted, Mantu Kumar Biswas, labour counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, said they were not aware of the rescue incident.

Seeking anonymity, another official at the mission said there have been a good number of such human-trafficking victims who primarily identified themselves as Bangladeshis. But later most of them were found to be Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar.

"Most of the victims were trafficked by a gang of Myanmar and Bangladeshi human traffickers. They were brought to Malaysia through the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar," he told The Daily Star.

According to police, the victims looked weak and despondent when they were rescued after keeping watch over the place for several days following a tip off. The traffickers had chained them together like slaves in a room.

PHOTO:
THE STAR (MALAYSIA)

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



OFFENSIVE GESTURE

3-match ban slapped on Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan has been suspended for the next three one-day internationals (ODIs) as a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) inquiry committee found the all-rounder guilty of making 'an inappropriate gesture' on live television during the second ODI between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at Mirpur on Thursday night.

The board also fined the former national captain Tk 3 lakh. The decision means Shakib will miss today's third and final ODI against Sri Lanka as well as the first

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1